

From: Andrew Haas
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/23/02 1:30pm
Subject: Please Throw Out the Microsoft Settlement

This is a letter appealing the government to not only throw out the Microsoft settlement, but further penalize Microsoft for its anti-competitive business practices and poor quality software. Microsoft has undermined the security of the United States, wasted billions of taxpayer dollars and gone against everything this country is founded upon.

What is the foundation of the United States? What has made this country so great?

If you were to ask me, I'd say it's the constitution of the U.S., the excellence of the people who founded this country, the commitment of the many men and women who have given their lives to make this a great country, and the principles they stand for.

How does Microsoft violate these principles?

By their first-to-market business methodology, where they bring to market poor quality software and leverage their Windows monopoly to become dominant, they stifle competition. In so doing, they have introduced software with security holes and software that requires constant fixes and upgrades. They waste the time of millions of people.

What if the founders of the country, the writers of the constitution, brought it to market before it was ready? What if they said, 'Well, this is good enough?' What if the people who fought in our world wars said, 'Well, we tried to be secure. We tried to make your country secure,' while all the while leaving tons of security holes? What if our intelligence organizations did a slipshod job?

The answer is our country would have fallen long ago to the forces that seek to undermine it.

Why should we reject any settlement with Microsoft and further penalize the company to the full extent of the law:

A) Microsoft's poor software quality has undermined

national security.

B) Microsoft's poor software quality has wasted billions of taxpayer dollars.

C) Microsoft has shown no remorse, worse, only arrogance, and has never taken responsibility for its actions.

D) Microsoft has created a marketplace where in order to compete, companies have to follow its model of producing poor quality products and rushing them to market too quickly.

Let's look at each of these points more closely:

A) Microsoft's poor software quality has undermined national security.

Microsoft software has been shown to be extremely vulnerable to viruses and have numerous security holes. In addition, it has been shown to be bug-ridden and crash often. The news is filled with reports of problems. For example, a warship had its weapons systems offline for 5 hours due to a problem with Windows. Nuclear materials have been misplaced or 'lost' due to bugs in Microsoft's database software. The NSA was infected by a virus that harmed its employees ability to communicate with each other.

B) Microsoft's poor software quality has wasted billions of taxpayer dollars.

As a professional software developer, I work with Microsoft products daily. Unfortunately there is no way around this, because my employers require it. I waste approximately an hour a day on slow software, bugs in software. I waste another hour due to incompatibilities in software and trying to work between Unix systems, which are used on the server side because they are stable, and Windows, which is used on the client side because of Microsoft's monopoly.

If IT professionals in government waste an equal amount of time as I do, then Microsoft is costing the taxpayers billions of dollars.

C) Microsoft has shown no remorse nor taken any responsibility for their actions.

In testimony before the government, Microsoft has

denied all the charges against them and made it sound like the government or the taxpayer is at fault. They have made few efforts if any to fix these problems. When Windows 2000 was released, Steve Ballmer made the statement, "Windows is finally stable." Well what was it before? Microsoft was penalized by the government in the 1994 consent decree, but made no efforts to change their actions. Microsoft considers itself above the law.

D) In order to compete with Microsoft, the entire software industry has made a habit of rushing products to market before they are done. In addition, since products built upon buggy operating systems are themselves buggy, it's almost impossible to produce very stable software that runs on Windows operating systems. It's like trying to build a house on foundations of sand -- when the sand shifts the house will fall. There are numerous examples of this -- Lotus Notes, Corel, Sun Java -- all of these products have had problems because they were built on a buggy operating system - Windows. The Solaris versions of Java have always been better than Windows, because Solaris is a much more stable operating system.

So my plea to the government is this.

If the founders of our country, and all the men and women who have given their lives to make this country the place it is had done their business the way Microsoft has, this country would have fallen long ago.

Microsoft has undermined national security and wasted billions of dollars. It has created an anti-competitive environment where companies have to produce poor quality software to compete. It has made the computer industry much harder to work in and good quality solutions hard to implement.

Please penalize Microsoft to the full extent of the law, as you would anyone who commits a crime against the people. Please do not let Microsoft's dominant position cloud your judgement. Please do the right thing.

Thank you very much,

Andrew Haas

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